

## Summary of Break Out Group Sessions

The following is a summary of responses of Department of Recreation and Parks staff to questions posed at a half-day Supervisor Staff Training Session on September 20, 2007 (see agenda at the end of this summary). Members of the consultant team reviewed the responses for input into the PROS plan.

Boxed items have been carried over to the PROS Plan Compilation of Recommendations
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**1. What demographic groups and communities are underserved by the Recreation and Parks Department (e.g. older adults, adults, minority populations, low-moderate income? Disabled? Others?). List at least five ways we can better serve any or all of these groups.**

**Groups Underserved**

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|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• (9) Disabled population, including young adults, children</li><li>• (4) Low income</li><li>• (3) African American seniors/African American general population</li></ul> |
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- (2) Latino/Hispanic groups
  - (2) Baby boomers
  - X generation
  - Middle and high school students who hang out at the movies and Town Center areas during non-school hours
  - Asian population
  - Russian/Eastern European population
  - Dog owners
  - Younger ethnic populations
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|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Additional after-school programs are needed throughout the City. Should consider at all Recreation Centers.</li></ul> |
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- Minorities in general
  - Hispanics in the arts
  - Young adults

**Ways to Better Serve**

- (2) Special/community events for all
  - Generate more funds for scholarship
  - Teen hangout/center citywide
  - More programs that are empowering youth to implement and have ownership
  - Lower fees – raise taxes
  - Increase ADA accessible opportunities
  - New marketing strategies
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|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Increase minority representation on boards, committees, commissions</li></ul> |
|---|
- Include registration forms in various languages/scholarship
  - (2) Survey or hold focus groups with pockets or areas of underserved populations

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- Make services/programs affordable
- Accessible/upgrade all facilities - ADA/more programming for disabled
- Need to provide more locations for pickup play rather than programming all facilities
- Cultural – more diverse programs to reach ethnic groups
- Allocate resources to serve
- Therapeutic Recreation Division
- Trainings/consultants
- Expand partnership with Montgomery County
- Add wheelchair lifts on vans
- Add youth, teen and adult programs ADA specific
- Recreation programs for low/moderate income families
- Aquatic/classes/etc.
- Need assessment to determine what is missing
- Make sure all employees know all the services available to residents
- (3) Market/promote to groups listed as underserved using minority papers and radio stations
- Upgrade facilities for disabled
- ADA trail at Nature Center
- More adaptable equipment
- More adult sports targeted to:
  - Soccer for Hispanics
  - Tai Chi in the parks
  - Rugby
- Events – Latin Festival, Greek Festival, Asian Festival, multi-cultural, etc.
- Town Center street festivals
- Language classes for employees/free during work hours (the more staff who can speak different languages the better service we could provide). Provide classes to staff at City cost.
- Train staff on cultural difference and needs
- Market better after creating programs to meet the needs

**2. What geographic areas of the City are under-served by parks, facilities and programs? Any specific locations within the City that we should consider?**

- (3) Town Center area
- (2) East Rockville
- Montrose
- Tower Oaks
- Rt. 355 - Talbot to Templeton
- Rt. 355 – 911-Veirs Mill Rd.
- Lewis Ave.
- Between 270 and Rt. 355
- Specific locations:
  - Community centers at Monument, Rose Hill, West End (These sites do not have community centers within a walking distance)

- Twinbrook pool (private location)
- Calvin Park, Monument Park, College Gardens Park need programs like playgrounds
- Computer room/public access in East Rockville (Pump House area)/homework help (provide a computer room when the Pump House is renovated)
- David Scull
- King Farm – indoor space for kids and teens
- All recreation facilities – need more programming
- Montrose could be renovated for additional programming
- Rockcrest
- Twinbrook
- Library (old)
- Any unused properties – Rockville skating rink
- Churches
- Calvin and Hillcrest underused, but not underserved
- College Gardens Park
- North Farm Park
- Isreal Park
- (3) Rt. 355 corridor - no access to green space
- Better transportation/shuttle service to get them to existing parks/OS
  - Rent A Bike/free bikes to use
  - Educate kids/teens to use public shuttle/bikes
- All residents don't have enough indoor public space for activities including:
  - Ice skating
  - Bowling
  - Skate park (indoor)
  - Gym space
- Twinbrook – senior programs

**3. What new initiatives should the department be working on? (Thinking outside the box is encouraged).**

- New marketing strategies
- Land acquisition
- Environmental – more green space
- ADA – management
- Reorganize land use (look at all we have)
- Obesity prevention – fitness programs
- More dog parks
- Increase garden plots city-wide
- Increase water features (i.e., more fountains, landscape streams/water gardens, ponds – fishing
- Amphitheaters
- Public coffee houses – music, poetry
- Go-Karts (Formula I style) – race through Town Center
- Putt-Putt
- Neighborhood Focus

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- Create “Drop In” programs/parks
- Outreach (signs don’t work – need live staff/volunteers)
- Reflect culture of ethnic populations surrounding design of park (i.e., Asian at Montrose)
- Dedicated Public Relations/Marketing Division
- Dedicated translator/cultural liaison/advisor
- Area “boards” representing different cultures and demographics (i.e., send one or two representatives to meet with City to discuss needs and new ideas (various recreation and other services))
- Systemized approach for translating services and doing outreach in different languages
- Ways to incorporate different cultural symbolism in facilities and programs - Japanese gardens/Yoga-Tai Chi in open spaces in neighborhoods, etc.
- Welcome to Rockville in different languages and with different cultural symbols (like on side of Senior Center building facing Gude)
- More mixed use in older neighborhoods, etc. (such as retail with living spaces above, living spaces in lofts, studios and living spaces)
- Flexible multi-purpose facility (skate/exercise classes, etc.)
- (2) Easier/improved access to information (more user friendly, improved Web site, in multiple languages)
- Diversified staff, volunteers and boards and commissions
- Expansion of locations for special events.
- Explore Senior Center/LPCC/Twinbrook
- Increase scholarship fund - Creative fund raisers - Add to existing base
- (2) More focus on health, fight against obesity, wellness-based programs (nutrition, yoga, health screenings)
- Community day to attract family interest (centers/parks)
- (2) Rockville beautification (i.e., flags/pendants/flowers, aesthetics, community involvement, tree planting events)
- (4) Go Green initiative (green facilities, solar power, geothermal systems, recycling receptacles at all parks/facilities and special events/Town Center)
- Earlier/stronger influence in development process
- Update older parks; better amenities
- Target programs/facilities for pre-teens
- Create safe playgrounds geared towards multi-age and ability groups
- Expand programs that are non-sport and sport – tournaments of all sorts
- More programs during holiday and spring breaks
- Adult programs (similar opportunities as seniors)
- Recreation & Park Employee family events
- Recreation & Park departmental tours and critiques, facilities and parks and programs
- Make events out of sledding at Glenview Mansion hill and other locations in city
- Winter ski trips
- Meditation gardens
- Commitment to fitness for all levels in the parks
- Improved access to restrooms

- More soccer fields
- Intergenerational programming
- Teen or under age hangout

**4. What new facilities at parks and recreation buildings would benefit the community? Which of our current facilities need improvement or redevelopment? What changes would you make?**

- ADA improvements
- Broome Park upgrade – change field lights from High Pressure Sodium to Metal Halide
- Consider synthetic turf in major areas of use
- More storage areas
- Renovate snack bar at Dogwood
- Build multi-use facility to accompany multi-cultural and inter-generational programs
- Parking additions
- Bubble the outdoor fitness pool
- Turn landfill into dirt bike park
- (2) Skate park upgraded - add bowls, ½ pipes, grinding rails
- Improve fitness centers at recreation centers (minus Swim Center)
- More multi-purpose space !!!
- More classroom space
- Continue to upgrade tot lots at Montrose, Elwood Smith, Twinbrook, Lincoln Park
- New Features
  - Community Center between Rt. 355 & 270
  - Smaller senior facilities around town
  - Smaller community centers
  - More staffing for all of above
  - Black top games
  - More facilities west of 270 – including a Glenora Recreation Center and a Wootton's Mill Recreation Center
  - Lincoln Park restroom
  - Roofed shelter – Welsh Park
  - Locate warehouse space for tennis courts/multi-use activities (dodge ball, basketball, soccer, lacrosse, kick ball, flag football, laser tag)
  - Senior Center expansion
- Old Giant building
  - Convert into Teen Center
  - Use parking lot for skating and under 21 club
- More multi generation buildings (i.e., childcare facility and parents can work out, area for seniors, people can have access to services at same location)
- Expand Montrose Center so it can be used for other activities besides child care
- Expand Senior Center for grandchildren
- Retrofit existing:

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- Nature Center – more green technology and showcase it for homeowners and other educational (example: Rain barrels)
- David Scull
- Park shelters
- Bathrooms (ADA) at all park shelters to encourage extended park use
- Upgrade picnic areas – more inviting
- Evaluate usage of Dogwood Park – Is it used by residents?
- Indoor fitness center
- Calvin Park – renovate bathrooms like annex at Twinbrook
- Dedicated teen center – accessible by public transportation
- Add gym to Montrose
- All parks to be ADA accessible
- More up-to-date playgrounds for all ages
  - Add outdoor fitness/exercise cluster
  - Convert Rockcrest wood mulch to rubber surface
- Convert skate park to other uses (e.g., Tai Chi)
- Enlarge smaller recreation centers (build up, not out) including Montrose, Rockcrest, Pump House
- Rehab park shelters
- Research self-cleaning, vandal-proof bath facilities
- Need for winter indoor facilities
- Rockcrest tennis court
- Rehab David Scull building
- Improve Calvin Park shelter
- King Farm Community Center
- Dogwood – inadequate parking for Rockville Football League
- Open bathrooms year-round
- Non-programmed/multi-use fields
- Passive parks
- Pathway lighting
- Permanent location for Farmers Market
- Add picnic tables to Hillcrest
- Amenities within parks
  - More permanent recycling containers and more encouragement (large, attractive signs with symbols) – more visible
  - Some picnic areas and parks not necessarily culturally inviting or welcoming because of limited access to bathrooms
  - Highlight trails for walking and routes for biking
- Need lighting in other parks; i.e., Woodley Gardens
- More teen programs- survey teens
- More outdoor movies in summer

**5. What amenities within our parks are rarely used?**

- Older playgrounds less utilized
- Tether ball/volleyball
- (4) Bankshot basketball at Swim Center
- Playground at Swim Center
- (2) Broome basketball court (turn into a dog park)
- Monument Park, Calvin Park, Hillcrest Park not rented
- King farm Farmstead – need a plan
- Glenora Park
- Sand volleyball courts
- David Scull Park not used much for drop-in – only scheduled games
- (2) Hillcrest tennis courts
- Senior Center basketball
- Monument basketball
- Rockcrest
- Skate Park
- Montrose Woods play equipment
- Broome Tennis courts
- Picnic tables and grills at certain locations
- Shelters at parks
- Baseball field at Montrose
- Isreal Park ballfield

**7. What new recreation programs are needed? Are there groups that are not being served by our current supply of programs? Have you heard of programs offered elsewhere that we should offer in Rockville?**

- Labyrinth
- Teens – need more programs
- Adult baseball
- More areas with computers available for the public to access internet
- Field hockey, lacrosse, rugby, caparoea (martial) arts
- 20-somethings not served
- Singles
- Ethnic population
- (3) Drive-in movies/movies on the lawn
- Speed dating for singles
- Cricket
- Diversity fair/dance
- Citizens with disabilities
- Fitness programs for teens and preschool
- (2) Organized basketball (wheel chair)
- Kickball

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Dodge ball</li><li>• Life skills for teens</li><li>• (4) Home improvement and design classes</li></ul>   |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Organized chess</li><li>• Double Dutch class</li></ul>   |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• MUSIC !! More classes like guitar, piano, flute, etc.</li><li>• Self defense classes</li></ul>   |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Adult soccer league</li></ul>  |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Lacrosse league</li><li>• Indoor roller skating/skate boarding – purchase old ‘Wheel A While’</li></ul>  |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Teen and pre-teen center near or in Town Center with high tech games and indoor extreme sports activities</li></ul>  |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Cooking classes – all ages</li><li>• Ropes course at the Nature Center</li></ul>   |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Open miscellaneous/spoken word/coffee house</li><li>• Conference/training facilities with state-of-the-art A/V</li></ul>   |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Black box theatre</li><li>• Drop-in (open gym)</li><li>• Mid-day/lunch hour programs</li><li>• Paint ball</li><li>• Yoga in the park – free group exercise</li><li>• More mirrored indoor space on Saturdays for dance classes</li></ul> |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Extreme urban sports such as paintball, skateboard parks, BMX bike track, indoor rock climbing</li></ul>   |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Post signage at parks for guided walks</li></ul>   |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Par 3 golf course at Glenview Mansion</li></ul>  |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Chinese New Year Parade (special event)</li><li>• (2) Outdoor amphitheater</li></ul>   |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Social walking program for seniors and others</li></ul>  |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Running track/year-round track and field</li></ul>   |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Cultural exchange (e.g., cooking class, language, crafts)</li><li>• Daytime programming for adults (under 60)</li></ul>  |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• A large facility for community events (e.g., old Giant) like the Bohrer Center in Gaithersburg</li></ul>   |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Develop King Farm barns</li><li>• More parking</li><li>• Coordinate with churches</li></ul>  |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• (2) Drop-in programs (Tai Chi, batting clinic, archery, etc.)</li><li>• Amenities for “Stroller moms” in parks including diaper changing areas, places to lock strollers, etc.</li></ul>   |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Pub crawls</li><li>• Dog Yoga</li></ul>  |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Family golf (glow-in-the-dark)</li></ul>   |



- Volleyball (regular and sand)
- Ethnic sports
- Reenacting groups

**7. To be successful our park system should be safe, free both of crime and unreasonable physical hazards. What mechanisms should we put in place improve public safety within our parks, facilities and programs?**

- Self-cleaning restrooms
- (2) Explore options for night security – rent-a-cop
- (4) Park Ranger system - horseback
- Check cracks in walk paths, equipment inspections for damage & repair
- Tree maintenance (large branches protruding, etc.), broken glass
- (5) Consider photo security/video surveillance in public parks
- Keep Police informed of recreation programs, especially open air activities
- (5) Lighting (energy efficient)
- (5) Police patrolling frequently – with segways
- (5) Call boxes (emergency) at every park
- (2) AEDs in parks and facilities
- Safety issues incorporated in new designs
- Volunteer escorts for events
- Emergency Procedures Action Plans for all facilities
- (7) Park watch program - Adopt-A-Park – also consider using teens, neighborhood watch
- Visibility
- Inspections – roaming staff supervision at drop-in basketball courts, etc.
- Signage with phone number for reporting vandalism
- More staff to increase safety with children's programs
- Enhance neighborhood with peace makers or conflict resolution folks
- Civilian-dressed security mingling with teen groups
- Poured-in-place play surface
- More off-leash dog enforcement
- Night programs
- Pathway access to parks for pedestrians especially those in wheelchairs

**8. Do you think staff within our Department has sufficient equipment and resources to do a high quality job? If no, what is needed?**

- Black top paths need repainting
- More facility engineers, L-scale staff
- Park bridges need to be built to sustain weight of trucks
- Lighting engineers in Traffic Division need tree crews
- Street crews also need tree crews

- Reduce bumping work schedule for special events (i.e., move furniture, work a special event, etc.)
- Replace aging equipment
- Update infrastructure
- (6) Need more staff – full time
- More training
- More funding
- More benefits and incentives for part-timers (such as some annual leave, partial health care, some sick leave etc.)
- Equipment/storage
- Program supplies
- Cost recovery hurts sometimes because can't use expenditure money if revenues are not reached
- More money needed for facility improvements
- (4) More staff/trucks for parks and equipment and trash recycling – need more than one person
- More staff for recreation programs
- Parks ranger
- Overtime dollars
- More operation dollars and less CIP dollars
- Laptop computer for field supervisor
- Staff/consultant for improving therapeutic recreation
- Playground maintenance crew
- Construction division needed
- Increased staff comparable percent to increased square footage, acreage, programs
- Improved administrative/support facilities for current/new staff
- Continue to improve communication between recreation staff and parks/facilities
- Responsibilities need to be more focused
- Administrative support
- More weekend staffing for parks
- IT support

**9. As a department we must ensure equitable access to all of our parks, facilities and programs, regardless of one's residence, physical abilities or financial resources. What can we do to improve in these areas?**

- (6) ADA upgrades and staff to coordinate
- Increased transportation systems for other programs (not just seniors)
- Match needs and interests to neighborhoods
- (2) Understand M&C and citizen's expectations re: finances versus cost recovery (don't make cost recovery such a priority)
- Shuttle Services/incentives for people to use buses
- Education about public transportation
- (2) People cannot afford to participate in programs, lower fees, affordable programs

- Subsidize programming
  - Improve transportation – ADA, number of vans, busses
  - Marketing/outreach to underserved groups
  - Programs for people with disabilities
  - Signage in multiple languages
  - Include a map/list of parks with amenities in the Recreation Guide
  - More storage
  - More multi-use trucks
  - More indoor space and staff
  - (2) Increase scholarship fund, marketing, exposure
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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Partner with Neighborhood Resources Department to get the “word out” on events, projects and programs.</li><li>• Rubber playground safety surface</li><li>• Sidewalk links</li></ul> |
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- Bus passes
  - Get rid of the Ginko tree at City Hall

**10.** When our citizens and staff talk about the Department of Recreation and Parks, what are three positive things that they say? What are three negative things that they say? Do you think we could improve the way we gain information and feedback from our citizens? If yes, how?

**Positive**

- (2) Staff responsiveness
- Field service is excellent
- (2) Scope of services provided accompanied by quality of service
- (3) Affordability and high value
- Staff smile at special events
- (4) Very professional staff
- (3) Customer service – give a lot of information
- Department does a good job – programs good, facilities kept up
- Rockville looks good and clean
- Clean and beautiful parks and facilities
- Safe (feel safe)
- Quality of programs and parks
- Great dog park
- Like our specialization
  - Senior Center
  - Nature Center
  - Doggie swim
- Special events and Town Center
- Arts
- Skate Park
- Great ballfields

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- Impressed with size, variety of Senior Center and its programs
- Accessible and beautiful park
- Great programs for all ages
- Grass is cut perfectly
- We love mutt-mitts
- Technology advanced (i.e., Rock Enroll on-line and telephone registration system)
- Enjoyed the program, events, etc.
- Rights-of-way are beautiful
- Parks are well maintained

**Negative**

- Not enough trash cans
- User Fees
- Not enough bilingual staff

<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Develop online system that allows for positive and negative feedback on programs, park maintenance and etc.</li></ul>
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- Have equal standard for responding to low income communities
- Demand exceeds supply
- Facility improvements needed - aging
- Maintenance crews starting early in the morning (6:00 a.m.) are too noisy in the neighborhoods
- Beer line is too long
- Don't block off our streets
- Non-resident fees
- Taxes too high
- Too much emphasis on Town Center and cut-backs on other services

<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• (4) Bathrooms closed</li></ul>
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- Not safe; too little lighting

<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Graffiti/vandalism/trash</li></ul>
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- (2) Dog owners not picking up after dogs, too much dog waste
- (2) Too little parking
- Too much noise
- Poor phone response
- (4) Difficult to navigate website
- Questionable art work at parks
- Fee increases bad

<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Bring back exercise stations in parks</li></ul>
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- Lack of awareness of extent of parks and facilities
- Cost recovery has become hindrance
- Cost of classes and problems
- Need more swings
- City Hall parking – not enough spaces

**Improvements**

- Incentives for filling out on-line surveys
- Diverse focus groups
- Suggestion – Rec & Parks hot line (one location to call in suggestions for anything related to Rec and Parks)
- Roving/walking surveys (record) – mobile units – especially at special events
- Giveaways for feedback participation
- Competitions for new program ideas
- More attractive feedback boxes for citizens
- Rockville Reports in multiple languages
- Increase communication with parents via children
- Free ESL programs run by City
- More neighborhood events and gather feedback info – use teen volunteers – Student Service Learning hours
- Feedback methods
  - E-mail surveys or web link
  - Written surveys at centers
  - Voice activated recorder, kiosk
- On-line surveys
- In-house market research and dollars off to program if participating

**City of Rockville Department of Recreation and Parks  
Supervisory Staff Training**

**Thursday, September 20, 2007  
8:30 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.**

**AGENDA**

- 8:30 – 9:00     **Breakfast and Networking**
- 9:00 – 9:30     **Introduction to the Parks, Recreation and Open Space (PROS) Plan**
- Intro by Burt/Steve
  - Intro by ERM
- 9:30 – 10:00     **Break Out Groups #1 Questions:**
1. What demographic groups and communities are underserved by the Recreation and Parks Department; e.g. older adults, adults, minority populations, low- to moderate-income? Disabled? Others? List at least five ways we can better serve any or all of these groups.
  2. What geographic areas of the City are under-served by parks, facilities and programs? Any specific locations within the City that we should consider?
  3. What new initiatives should the Department be working on? (Thinking outside the box is encouraged).
- 10:00-10:15     **Reporting Back**
- 10:15 – 10:45     **Break Out Groups #2 Questions:**
4. What new facilities at parks and recreation buildings would benefit the community? Which of our current facilities need improvement or redevelopment? What changes would you make?
  5. What amenities within our parks are rarely used?
  6. What new recreation programs are needed? Are there groups that are not being served by our current supply of programs? Have you heard of programs offered elsewhere that we should offer in Rockville?
- 10:45 – 11:00     **Reporting Back**
- 11:00 – 11:15     **Excellent Park System Introduction** (Intro by ERM)
- 11:15 – 11:45     **Break Out Group #3 Questions:**
7. To be successful our park system should be safe, free both of crime and unreasonable physical hazards. What mechanisms should we put in place improve public safety within our parks, facilities and programs?
  8. Do you think staff within our Department has sufficient equipment and resources to do a high quality job? If no, what is needed?
  9. As a department we must ensure equitable access to all of our parks, facilities and programs, regardless of one's residence, physical abilities or financial resources. What can we do to improve in these areas?
  10. When our citizens and staff talk about the Department of Recreation and Parks, what are three positive things that they say? What are three negative things that they say? Do you think we could improve the way we gain information and feedback from our citizens? If yes, how?
- 11:45 – 12:00     **Reporting back and Wrap-Up** (ERM/Steve/Burt)